BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES GRADUATE PROGRAM
POLICY FOR CANDIDACY EXAMINATION

For a student to take the Candidacy Examination, they must first meet the requirements of The Ohio State University Graduate School. This includes being in good standing, i.e., with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in the Graduate School and registered for at least three graduate credit hours during the semester of the Examination. The written and oral parts of the candidacy exam will be evaluated separately.

Written Portion
The written portion of the Candidacy Examination will be taken by the end of Autumn Semester of the third year for Ph.D. students, and by the beginning of year 4 for MSTP students. Any deviation from this timetable must be appealed in writing and approved by the Program Directors prior to the beginning of the expected semester. The examination will culminate in the completion of a full-length research proposal that reflects the intended area of the student’s dissertation research. The proposal will be written in the format of an NIH small grant, as taught, written, and reviewed in the grant writing class in the second year. The student must write the proposal independently, although the student may consult with their Dissertation Advisor, who should approve the dissertation proposal for suitability of distribution to the Candidacy Exam Committee. The candidacy exam committee should consist of a minimum of four faculty members, with at least two faculty members who have mentored at least one student who has graduated with his/her PhD. The Committee must be selected and convene in the spring semester of the second year and must include:
1) The advisor, who must be a member of the Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program faculty
2) At least two other Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program faculty members
3) At least one person from outside of the advisor’s home department. This person might also be from another graduate program and not a member of the Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program faculty. However, either person must be approved by the Graduate School as having “M” or “P” faculty status). Note: “M” status faculty may sit on a candidacy exam committee, but NOT on a dissertation committee.
4) The advisor’s spouse cannot be part of this committee.

To reiterate, all committee members of the committee should have "P" faculty status with the Graduate School, although one member may have "M" faculty status for the candidacy exam only. For “M” faculty status to be a member of the dissertation committee, the student and mentor must request approval by the Graduate Studies Committee. Any exceptions outside of “P” and “M” faculty, e.g., professors from outside of OSU, the student and mentor must request approval by the Graduate Studies Committee, who will then request the Graduate School for an official exemption. Please see Candidacy Exam Committee form in Appendix D.

It is the student's responsibility to make all arrangements for establishing a date for the oral part of the examination that is agreeable to all members of the examination committee. This date needs to be established early so that there will be enough time to

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complete the candidacy exam by the time stipulated by the Graduate School (end of Autumn Semester of third year). At least 4 weeks before the established oral exam date, the student must deliver the written document to the Candidacy Exam Committee members for their review. After 2 weeks of review time, the Examination Committee will determine the result of the written portion of the examination to be either satisfactory or unsatisfactory, and this result will be communicated to the mentor. It is the responsibility of the student to remind the committee that they will need to make this evaluation within 2 weeks and to communicate it to the mentor. It is also the responsibility of the student to remind the mentor to obtain the result from the committee members.

If the written exam is found to be satisfactory for moving forward, it is the responsibility of the student to ask each committee member to electronically sign the Graduate School form that confirms that the written document is satisfactory.

If the proposal is found to be unsatisfactory, the student will be given an opportunity to do a re-write according to suggestions made by the committee. The corrected written document must be re-submitted to the committee in a period of time that does not exceed one academic semester.

**Oral Portion**

This part of the Candidacy Examination will be based on the written document, but will include any materials considered to be relevant by the Candidacy Exam Committee. At least half of the oral examination will be based on general science questions that are designed to elicit critical thinking. The oral examination will be held in compliance with the rules set by The Ohio State University Graduate School. While the advisor participates in the evaluation of the written portion of the exam, during the oral exam the advisor should be present and in the ideal case participates minimally. The advisor must not answer for the student, may ask some questions if necessary, and is available to help other committee members as needed. The advisor may not serve as chair of the Committee. The format for the oral exam will be a chalk board presentation; computer-based presentations will be limited.

Successful completion of the Candidacy Examination indicates that the student passed both portions, written and oral. Students who fail to pass the exam will be allowed to re-take the examination one more time, and this may or may not require revisions to the submitted proposal. The re-take of the exam should take place in a period of time that does not exceed one academic semester. Students who do not pass the candidacy examination the second time will be unable to continue.